

Welcome!

The Spokane Valley-Rathdrum Prairie Aquifer Atlas presents a comprehensive summary of the region’s most precious groundwater resource and is a basic reference of the geographic, geologic and hydrologic characteristics of this aquifer.

The Atlas is designed in a narrative format supported by graphs, maps and images. It is intended for broad community use in education, planning, and general technical information. The preparation and publication of the original Atlas were partially funded by a United States Environmental Protection Agency grant for aquifer wellhead protection.

The information was collected and obtained from a variety of sources, including: United States Environmental Protection Agency, Idaho Department of Environmental Quality, Washington Department of Ecology, Panhandle Health District, Kootenai County Planning Department (Idaho), Spokane County (Washington), United States Geologic Survey and Eastern Washington University.

The Spokane Valley-Rathdrum Prairie Aquifer spans two states (Washington and Idaho) and lies within three counties (Kootenai, Bonner and Spokane). Natural resources, such as the Aquifer, that cross political boundaries are often subject to different, and sometimes conflicting, standards, protections and uses. This Atlas is a joint effort by agencies in both states to create a holistic representation of the Aquifer as both geologic feature and a natural resource used daily by more than 500,000 people.

Political boundaries are absent on the front cover map. The authors intend the reader first view the Aquifer as a continuous natural feature, then investigate the various aquifer elements presented in this Atlas. The authors believe that factual information about the Aquifer will generate greater public understanding of the region’s groundwater and lead to continued protection and wise use of this precious and finite resource.

What’s New?

The original Aquifer Atlas was published in 2000. This document is an update of the original publication that includes a few new topics and more recent information. Major revisions were made to several pages based on comments received from Aquifer Atlas users. Individuals and organizations responsible for the 2000 Edition and the 2004 Edition are listed on page 26.

The pages in this document are color coded (see right) by category to assist the atlas user. The original page order has been changed slightly to better group similar topics. Other changes from the original Atlas include:

Page 3: New! “Historic Aquifer” presents a 1860 painting of the Aquifer.

Page 5: The satellite image is based on 2003 data.

Page 6: New! “Digital Mapping”

Page 12: The geologic map has been generalized.

Page 15: New! “Aquifer-River Interchange”

Pages 17-18: Computer modeling information is combined on two pages.

Page 20: “Regional Trends” replaces the original “Climate & Population” page.

Page 21: Two original pages have been combined into one page, “Aquifer Issues.”

Navigating the Atlas

The pages in the Aquifer Atlas are organized into six categories, and each category is color coded in the title and outside margin to assist the reader in locating a specific page.

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